

NDSD Name Change Update

The topic of the North Dakota School for the Deaf's name change is a hugely emotional issue for those of us who cherish the school and its rich history. It certainly has not been an easy decision. Members of the NDSD Management Team spent many hours debating the pros and the cons of suggesting a name change because we agree that this effort may help secure the future of NDSD.

NDSD was established to provide a free education for all deaf/hard of hearing students. The school has a long and proud history of accomplishment. However since the passage of the Public Law 94-142 in 1975, many deaf or hard of hearing children now attend mainstream programs. Other than NDSD, there are educational programs for deaf students located in communities such as Fargo, Bismarck, Minot and Grand Forks. The North Dakota School for the Deaf is just one of the "continuum of services/schools" that parents may choose from when they look at educational options for their deaf children. Parents no longer feel obligated to send their children to NDSD and some choose to enroll their children into local public schools. Our Outreach staff works diligently to identify deaf and hard of hearing students in public schools and provide consultation services to teachers who seek assistance. Fortunately, NDSD's Outreach workers have been able to assist many deaf and hard of hearing students in mainstream programs across the state.

NDSD's outreach department has grown dramatically as the school's services have expanded. NDSD has outreach offices located in Fargo, Bismarck, Minot, Devils Lake and Grand Forks. NDSD plans to expand the outreach department by at least one staff member this year and possibly one or two positions (requested) for the next biennium in order to assist with public relations and the continued growth of our program. NDSD's goal is to continue providing top quality education for deaf and hard of hearing students. However are you aware that NDSD now serves more than just deaf students and their families? The school receives numerous requests for services/assistance from the state's aging senior population – there are hundreds (perhaps thousands) who are losing their hearing and want to learn how to cope with their hearing loss. Although the ND School for the Deaf's top priority continues to be the education of students who are deaf it is a fact that NDSD currently provides far more services to outreach individuals than it does to students who attend the ND School for the Deaf.

NDSD outreach staff members maintain a running log of the services that have been provided through our outreach department. Listed below are statistics from the past four bienniums:

<u>2001-2003</u>	<u>Total students served by NDSD = 67</u>	<u>Total Outreach services provided = 4301</u>
<u>2003-2005</u>	<u>Total students served by NDSD = 59</u>	<u>Total Outreach services provided = 6055</u>
<u>2005-2007</u>	<u>Total students served by NDSD = 57</u>	<u>Total Outreach services provided = 8943</u>
<u>2007-2009</u>	<u>Total students served projected=52</u>	<u>Total Outreach services projected = 9000++</u>

With each passing biennium, the number of students who receive direct services from NDSD decreases as NDSD's outreach services continue to expand. **It is for that reason we believe the name of our state agency must be changed to reflect both entities within the title of our agency: the school's name as well as a new name to identify the resource center for people with hearing loss.**

The two name options that were selected by voting committee members each retain the North Dakota School for the Deaf within its title. The added name (attached to the ND School for the Deaf) would help the nearly 9000 other individuals seeking services to recognize our state agency as more than just a school for 22 deaf children. The two names selected from the list of several options are listed below:

1. North Dakota School for the Deaf/Resource Center on Hearing Loss
2. North Dakota Resource Center on Hearing Loss/School for the Deaf

During the fall of 2008, students, staff, families, alumni and other interested individuals will have the opportunity to vote for one of the two names shown above. The new name will better reflect the mission of ND School for the Deaf. Check the NDSD website this fall for an opportunity to cast your vote.

It is the hope of the NDSD Management team that members of the Deaf community as well as students, staff and other supporters of the ND School for the Deaf will endorse our efforts to adapt the name to better fit the agency's needs. We believe it is a step in the right direction to keeping NDSD open and in operation for many years to come. For questions or concerns please feel free to contact Dennis Fogelson, Superintendent, at the North Dakota School for the Deaf. You may call 665-4400 or email at: Dennis.Fogelson@sendit.nodak.edu